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Gallery in the Cinema

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Gallery in the Cinema 2016–2017

Steven Paige, *Let's Go Bowling* 2016, (Commission)
5th April 2016–Thursday 14th April 2016

Kihlberg & Henry, *Pleasure Through Drowning* 2015,
and *This Building This Breath* (partnership with Fig-2)
14th June 2016–23rd June 2016

Bridget Reweti, *I thought I would of climbed more
mountains by now*, 2015,
23rd August 2016–1st September 2016

Abigail Reynolds, *The Mother's Bones* (Commission)
1st November 2016–November 2016

Kayla Parker, *On Location*, 2017 (Commission)
10th January 2017–19th January 2017

Rory Pilgrim, *Sacred Repositories Trilogy*,
20th June 2017–July 2017

Allan Sekula, *Lottery of the Sea* 2006,
1st August 2017–31st August 2017

Sarah Forrest, *Recital* 2016,
4th September 2017–22nd September 2017

Gallery in the Cinema

We are delighted to present these four essays by Felix Bernstein and Gabe Rubin, Bridget Crone, Adam Pugh, and Lucy Reynolds, exploring ideas around artists' film and video in relation to their exhibition. These essays were commissioned in response to the *Gallery in the Cinema* initiative at Plymouth Arts Centre, led by its artistic director Ben Borthwick, which presented a programme of eight artists' moving image works (listed on page 2) shown in the Centre's cinema on a daily loop between 2016 and 2017. The exhibitions were placed between gallery exhibitions and gave artists the opportunity to show moving image works, which are often shown in a gallery environment, in a small high spec cinema space.

Lucy Reynolds draws on the expanded cinema and "film sculpture experiments" of Filmaktion and others in the Structural film movement of the 1970s to move beyond the constraints of single screen mainstream cinema. Her essay, 'Expanding Cinema: The Promise of the Gallery', traces a trajectory from these histories to the contemporary gallery installations of Douglas Gordon's *24 Hour Psycho* and works by Pipilotti Rist.

Adam Pugh's essay, 'Back to the Future', critiques the polarization of cinematic culture that locates artists' moving image at one end of the spectrum and

mainstream film at the other, arguing that cinema needs to be a site of plurality that offers "unexpected encounters and unknown pleasures".

In 'Curating Sensible Stages: Fabulation and an Artists' Cinema', Bridget Crone discusses the relationship between audience and moving image artwork—and the "space of encounter"—and reflects on what constitutes artists' cinema both within and beyond the gallery.

Artist duo Felix Bernstein and Gabe Rubin's collaborative performance essay, 'Repeatable Viewings', critiques the variety of contexts within which today's artists can present their film and video work, evaluating the role of curators, reviewing the venues, the composition of audiences and the milieu.

We offer these essays both as exploration of the critical landscape for understanding contemporary artists' moving image practice, particularly the modes of exhibition and reception, and as a way to mark *Gallery in the Cinema*, which unfortunately ended with the closure of the arts programme of the Plymouth Arts Centre due to the loss of Arts Council funding.

Dr Anya Lewin and Dr Kayla Parker (eds.)
Arts Research at University of Plymouth 2020



**UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH**
School of Art, Design and
Architecture

Expanding Cinema: The Promise of the Gallery

Lucy Reynolds

We have now reached a situation where it is necessary for projection events to be defined and specified at a more general level, controlling the component elements, their space and time distribution, and audience relationship as an integral aspect of the film structure. The biggest problem to be dealt with is creating a physical 'venue' for this kind of work. The most suitable existing possibility must lie in performance or installation in the art gallery situation and this requires the back up of a pool of suitable equipment which can be transported, with performance and installation for longer than a one-night stand. Meanwhile the work will continue to develop and be seen under inadequate conditions. (Le Grice, 1972: 43)

Malcolm Le Grice's 1972 statement concludes an article, 'Real TIME/SPACE', which describes the burgeoning culture of expanded film practices which were then challenging the limits of the cinema's conventional viewing system. His frustrations epitomize how the international developments in artists' filmmaking (his article mentions US based contemporaries such as Paul Sharits and Tony Conrad alongside his own work and that of his British contemporaries) by the early 1970s had outgrown the dimensions and durations of the cinema space. His dissatisfaction at the options available for showing these inter-disciplinary forms of film led him to conclude that the gallery rather than the cinema auditorium was the most appropriate place for the screening of his film experiments. His objective, through seminal film performances such as *Horror Film 1* (1970), was the creation of a tangible experience of film in the 'here and now', through a use of multi-screen projection and performance that might awaken the level of critical attention that he had found wanting in the spectatorial space of mainstream cinema. As the quote above shows, his concerns were not only motivated by the desire to expand his film works beyond the single screen format, but also sought a different kind of viewer. As an art school graduate attuned to visual arts as well as cinema contexts, he was interested in the film experience that might be possible through the different emphases of time and space offered in the rooms of the gallery, where images are absorbed through personal perambulation rather than pre-determined event.

The desire to overstep the architectural and spectatorial conventions of the cinema was not new to the 1970s Structural film movement. An earlier avant-garde had already identified the potential for film exhibition outside the cinema, Laslo Moholy Nagy's 1925 manifesto for a 'Simultaneous or Poly Cinema', for example, predicted the multi-screen film installations of the millennium when it describes how: "One can,

for example, visualize the normal projection plane being divided by a simple adapter into different obliquely positioned planes and cambers, like a landscape of mountains and valleys" (1967: 41).¹ Moholy Nagy recognized the perceptual potentials of film beyond the narrative conventions already set in place for it by commercial film production. Like Le Grice he saw the auditorium as inadequate for his ambition to realize a potential in the film medium relating to his creative endeavours in design and art, as well as to the audiences familiar to them from those contexts. However, Moholy Nagy's proposals for an expanded cinema experience remained on paper, whilst Le Grice was able to test out his ideas in a number of gallery spaces in the years to come, from the more municipal environment of the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool in June 1973 for a week of 'Filmaktion' film events and installations, to the radical art spaces of 1970s London such as Gallery House and the New Arts Lab.

The week of events at Filmaktion could be seen as a high point in the explorations of film in the gallery setting by Le Grice and his contemporaries at the London Filmmakers' Co-operative. The range of works shown there² demonstrates how the gallery configurations enabled them to bring new material dimensions to their films by, according to Gill Eatherley, "bringing it off the screen down into the actual gallery situation and working with objects and movement" (in Nicolson, 1986: 42). In works such as *Chair Installation*, for instance, Eatherley created in the gallery space what might be understood as a moving image environment, combining chairs placed on a low dais, over which multiple slide and 16mm films of the same chairs were projected, interspersed with flashes of strobe lights and performance, whilst an elusive performer periodically moved between the chairs. This dense convergence of different media and objects remained in the gallery throughout each day, relying on film loops for its durational presence. The rhythms set in play between the different forms of movement within the installation, from the material stillness of the chairs in situ to the moving image onscreen, the flashing freeze frame of the strobe and the performing body, reflected the artist's own enquiry into the different temporal and spatial workings of cinema and gallery, with the chair as the point upon which they converge—as representation and presentation. But at the same time, unlike an auditorium, this was not a chair for sitting, but a chair in flux between stillness and movement, evoking the spectre of cinema's spectatorial stasis, in a fitting metaphor for the transitional nature of works such as Eatherley's: neither cinema nor sculpture, yet drawing on the codes and conditions of both. Indeed, Eatherley was familiar with the term installation

from contemporary sculpture, and was interested in how Fluxus, and artists with more dematerialized conceptual practices, presented simple household objects as sculptural form. Along with contemporaries in Europe and America, such as Valie EXPORT and Paul Sharits, she could be considered part of a first wave of artists who consciously used the gallery over the cinema as a siting for their films, as a means of bringing new sculptural elements to their film practices. She observes that *Chair Installation* and the other works developed at Gallery House were “some of the first installations...there wasn’t anything in museums or galleries” (Eatherley in Nicolson, 1986). Beyond a number of earlier environments containing projections at Better Books, the Co-op’s first home, by Jeff Nuttall and Jeffrey Shaw between 1966 and 1968 (Henri, 1974: 114-5), there is indeed little evidence to support a precedence of British film installation at this time, suggesting that Eatherley’s *Chair Installation* may have been one of the first, alongside works such as Le Grice’s ‘four screen duration,’ *Gross Fog* (1973) and Annabel Nicolson’s *Sideways Projection*, both shown alongside *Chair Installation* at Filmaktion. Their contemporary David Dye also exemplifies Eatherley’s transitional mode of film sculpture in works such as his installation *Unsigning for Eight Projectors*—presented in 1972 in the Hayward Gallery *New Art* exhibition. Here, a ring of eight 8mm projectors each project an image of Dye writing a letter of his name—but as the dangling screen in the middle twists and moves in accordance with movement in the gallery space—so the letters jumble and superimpose, and those beams not caught by the expanse of the screen are cast unfocused and out of scale on the gallery walls around the circle of projectors. This elegant exploration of authorship invited the visitor to circulate around the projectors, which took on a sculptural dimension in their fixed and visible positions facing inwards in a circle. Yet, at the same time, the ephemerality and contingency of film was at play in the twisting central screen, as the projected letters were intermittently revealed and disappeared.

Dye’s convergence of film and sculpture was compelling to the young critic Richard Cork, a key advocate for conceptual art practices in Britain, who visited the Hayward show and writes enthusiastically in the *Evening Standard* of the potential of Dye’s work to speak across fields of practice which had held themselves distinct. As he said: “This was the excitement of Dye’s exhibition: the realization it offered that the boundaries between the two media of expression need not be tightly sealed off, that both sides can converge and yet succeed in defining their different priorities with exactitude” (Cork, 2003: 58-60).³ However, for Eatherley and Le Grice, like many of

their peers associated with the London Filmmaker’s Co-operative, the opportunities to exhibit in this context were not so forthcoming. For many audiences, as well as curators, critics and art institutions, film was still not an acceptable medium for artists or art exhibition—belonging to the commercial realms of cinema entertainment, and requiring complicated equipment and maintenance. Despite his support of Dye’s work, Cork was disparaging of the unprecedented mix of film and video with other conceptual art works to be found in the *Survey of the Avant-garde in Britain* held at Gallery House in 1972, writing of how film and video was “still in its infancy; and any artist who wishes to encroach on its preserves should be confronted with the label ‘handle with care’” (1972). Except for their positive and fruitful experiences at Filmaktion and Gallery House, the expanded film experiments of Le Grice, Annabel Nicolson and other were still most often encountered in the make shift spaces of the art lab rather than the art institution, where film was more often sidelined to the spaces of the education room rather than main gallery spaces.⁴

It was some decades later before changing technologies and new critical and institutional endorsement enabled film to find new acceptance in the spaces of the gallery, alongside other art media. Paradoxically this welcome was encouraged by what Catherine Fowler has called the ‘re-enchantment’ of artists and curators with a form of popular and narrative cinema antithetical to Le Grice. As Erika Balsom has noted, “the tremendous institutional endorsement of the moving image at this time is inextricable from the widespread embrace of high-quality video projection that occurs at the turn of the decade” (2013: 20). In major, often simultaneous, museum exhibitions such as *Spellbound* at the Hayward Gallery in 1996, and *Hall of Mirrors, Art and Film Since 1945* in the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art in the same year, film projection, as well as painting and sculpture, explicitly referenced the iconography of classic cinema as artists and curators in the age of the VHS and home viewing found, on the cusp of its supposed disappearance into digital dematerialisation, a new appreciation of cinema. This well documented ‘cinematic turn’ was less concerned either with Surrealism’s picture palace enchantments or a post-modern celebration of popular culture, than with cinema’s new archival dimension. The film installations of Stan Douglas, such as 1995’s *Der Sandmann*, which referenced the outdated media of celluloid and the cinema back lot of UFA, birthplace of German Expressionism, or Douglas Gordon’s *24 Hour Psycho*, which referenced Hollywood’s back catalogue, could be considered paradigmatic works of the period.

It is difficult to trace a neat trajectory from the film performances and multi-screen projections and installations developed at Filmaktion, to Gordon's slowed down images of *Psycho* projected from a single hanging screen in the empty, darkened gallery space. Gordon's evocation of cinema as history stands in sharp contrast to the 'here and now' of film in real TIME/SPACE which Le Grice and his peers were keen to assert. Indeed, the film sculpture experiments at Filmaktion could be read as an elaborate rejection of narrative cinema and its codes, informed by a media critique drawing on sources as various as Louis Althusser and Herbert Marcuse to Christian Metz and Kafka, and performed through modernist strategies of distanciation, disruption and self reflexivity. However, looking more closely, it's possible to make the case for how the temporal and spatial conditions of these two forms of exhibition are less distinct and more reciprocal than the 'white cube/black box' distinctions which discourse on artists' film from Le Grice onwards has encouraged. *24 Hour Psycho*'s slowed down frames share with structural film a forensic formalist critique and revelatory imperative for which it is seldom given credit. Its compelling silence and somnambulist pace undermines *Psycho*'s original narrative force to reassert the fundamental fragmentation of the still image lost beneath the momentum of the story line and the relentless forward motion of the projector.⁵ In this sense, the more contemplative mode of attention encouraged in the gallery viewer allows them a more profound and concentrated access to the film image, not only as a result of the emphasis on grain and texture thrown into relief by the film's slowed momentum, but as their close spatial proximity to the screen violates the line seldom crossed in the auditoria between seat and screen.

It is only in recent years that the work of Le Grice and Eatherley has found full endorsement in the spaces of major museums and galleries, such their recent reprise of expanded works first performed at Filmaktion, now revisited for new audiences in the tank spaces of Tate Modern in 2012 or most recently London's Raven Row gallery in 2016. However, it would be incorrect to state that their work has now been assimilated into the canons of moving image art, and understood as an earlier link in a neat trajectory to the now well established international phenomenon of 'gallery film' first epitomized by *24 Hour Psycho*; and now taken forward in new technological and conceptual configurations, from the spectacular installations of Doug Aitken or Pipilotti Rist, to works which cross the boundaries between documentary, ethnography and feature film, such as those by Ben Rivers, Luke Fowler or Marine Hugonnier. For there remains in the works of Eatherley, Le Grice, or their contemporary Annabel Nicolson, a commitment to film as a live interaction

with the audience, which sets them apart from not only from the durations of the gallery but the cinema as well. For the promise of the gallery for Le Grice and Eatherley rested not on replacing one temporal and spatial condition for another, but on finding a space between the two, where a more dynamic configuration of the live film experience might meet the spatial expansiveness, and contemplative intensities, of the gallery.

¹Originally published as *Malerei, Fotografie, Film*, which appeared as Volume 8 in the *Bauhausbücher* series in 1925 (2nd edn. 1927); the German edition was reissued in 1967 in facsimile in the series *Neue Bauhausbücher* by Florian Kupferberg Verlag, Mainz.

²See Lucy Reynolds, 'Filmaktion: new directions in film art', 2007.

³Richard Cork, 'The artist seeking the potential of film', *Evening Standard*, 12 May 1972; reprinted in *Everything Seemed Possible: Art in the 1970s*, 2003, pages 58–60.

⁴See, for example, 'Film Structure—Three Evenings' at the Tate in June 1973. The programme leaflet, giving details of film evenings organised by Peter Gidal and Malcolm Le Grice, is headed 'Activities arranged by the Education Department'. Source: British Artists Film and Video Study Collection, University of the Arts London.

⁵For further discussion of stillness in *24 Hour Psycho*, see Laura Mulvey, in *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image*, 2006, pages 102–3.

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Back to the Future

Adam Pugh

Uncompromising, abstract, a vessel for time before space, the cinema is the perfect site for artists' moving image, and artists' moving image is the perfect subject for the cinema. That the two have become estranged from one another belies the myriad resonances which still exist, and are pertinent now, perhaps, more than ever. To secure a future for cinema in the UK, which is anything other than moribund, means, ironically, to look back, far back, to a past in which an artists' cinema was indivisible from its other forms, and experiment and curiosity rewarded by custodians and audiences alike.

The current conditions of cinema have changed nothing of its structure; nor, while it might be obvious by looking at its trajectory through the twentieth century why and how artists were gradually written out of its narrative, do they preclude them from being reintroduced. While years of the studio system have served, needless to say, to wholly disabuse UK audiences of the notion of cinema as an artistic or experimental force, structurally, the vehicle still exists: what we watch has changed, yet the way we watch it—at the cinema—hasn't. The supposition, therefore, that those links are still strong is reason to look towards a future in which they can be better reintegrated, not mourn a past which has divorced them irrevocably.

Though born of the proscenium arch theatre, the cinema as specific architectural space is perhaps better seen as a distillation, rather than development or progression, of its ancestor: a gradual paring-down, attenuation or refinement of its essential characteristics, and, as a living reminder of the Modernist ideal, also an accumulation of the rejection of those that are superfluous; the denial of the space as space at all. It is rather a *zone of potential*. And the history of cinema as site, after all, is the history of the pursuit of a perfect environment: one foregrounded completely and only by film, in which image completely arrests the viewer, erases the messy world of phenomena and summons instead a weightless, dimensionless non-space, a volume effacing itself in the service of its one lit wall: oddly, a space becoming two-dimensional precisely in order to effect a virtual third. By the time it arrived, sound also conspired to envelop its audience. In this way, it is most useful, perhaps, to think of it not as a physical space at all, but as a space of enchantment: a sacred space, almost.¹

A cathedral is rich in decoration, summoning awe and wonder in sight (a vast rose window, a high vaulted roof) and sound (the organ, and the very acoustics of the space itself), and though its altar is arguably its most important component, symbolically, it is plural, multiplanar, with several points of focus. In contrast,

while in time it came to eschew decoration, came to be a distillation of itself, the cinema is a reduction of the experience of the cathedral: much simpler, essential, the rose window and the organ alone with no side-chapels, rood screens, fonts or choirs. What matters most of all in each, and what unites them, is that the site is distinct, particular, *set apart*, ordained for one function—and that that function is concerned entirely with transcendence: ironically, the effacement of (the) space whatsoever.

What is important here, then, is not a sense of the sacred in any specific spiritual sense, but the fact that by being specifically set apart in this way, the space makes possible a *particular* activity and a *particular* transcendence. This might take the form of its Modernist and, admittedly, very Western tendency in the mould suggested by Peter Kubelka, among others,² in which *all* stimuli extraneous to the material to be projected are eliminated; or it might be looser, more contingent on context and location, as with Yto Barrada's Cinémathèque de Tanger.³ Whether or not the former is impossible or desirable is somewhat irrelevant: more pertinent here is the sense that the better the cinema, the better the attention given to the reception of the projected film. If this is the kernel of the cinema as site, then artists' moving image, surely, is its ideal subject.

Artists' moving image requires the kind of close viewing that the cinema has been created to achieve; this concentration (indeed, to *concentrate*, etymologically, is to bring to a common centre, *com centrum*, which here, helpfully, implies assembly). Arguably, though any film benefits from being shown in a cinema auditorium, and audiences benefit from the sense of assembly it occasions, the proliferation of other platforms mean that the majority of films currently shown in cinemas don't activate this urgency alone. Which is at odds here: the latest *Star Wars* film that will also be accessed via home cinema, online, via mobile devices everywhere, or the artist's work intended exclusively to be seen in a place of quiet, darkness, acoustic deadness, that site written into its very structure, screened for one night only? Is this where cinemas are going wrong: forgetting that they are sites at all, demurring to an indeterminate status as one possible means of accessing a uniform experience which floats freely between different outputs? Keep *Star Wars* in cinemas, as it's still better there than at home, but why not give some screen space over to work which activates the specific site of the cinema itself; awaken that dormant function which a century's architectonics have encoded, to a greater or lesser extent, in every small-town fleapit, every plastic multiplex, every recuperated boutique screen.

Cinemas given over exclusively to artists' moving image—however unlikely—while an alluring prospect for those with a professional or artistic stake in it, would do little to relieve its isolation, and are perhaps as undesirable as those which show nothing but commercial studio releases. A balanced diet is surely key to recuperating a more mainstream position for artists' work in the cinema.

At the same time, galleries have embraced the idea of the cinema auditorium, often constructing elaborate self-contained spaces in order to show longer work on a loop. This invariably ends up an altogether unsatisfying, poor man's version of the cinema space, a corrosive incursion into the role of cinema as site for the cinematic which further limits the experience of viewing artists' moving image by claiming it as another instance of the primacy of the art market.

The gallery is the site for that work—monitor-based, architectural, performative—which is intended for a non-cinema space. That which is cinematic (a criterion which can be interpreted as loosely as necessary, though perhaps not only that with a beginning and ending, but also intended to be watched from one point to the other without break; viewed by a captive congregation) is better seen in the cinema.⁴

So, if we were to want to reintroduce artists' work to the cinema, then how? The cinema is presided over by a toxic cocktail of studio-held multiplexes, ersatz 'independent' chains and genuine independents, the latter who are variously either so in thrall to, or imperilled by (or both!) the thrust of the industrial machinery and exponential increase of the calendar of giant releases that they fall back on a dilute version of the commercial-only model. Yet in doing so they are seemingly unaware that this is ultimately auto-destructive. By simultaneously affirming that model as the only one possible, by extension, they write themselves out of the picture.

Within this amorphous category of 'independents', though, there are those cinemas which have successfully maintained independence in spirit as well as name, and have managed to reinvent something of a more adventurous programme in this relentlessly commercial new order: they prove that an alternative is possible. However, these are few and far between, and either exist only as part of the more liberal ecosystem a large city offers, or diverge entirely from the traditional model, by functioning as cooperatives. The gutsy, omnivorous small-town cinema, fuelled by home-grown programming, is a dying breed.

Hope may lie with the independents, but those commercial forces that have allowed the chains to thrive have established themselves as utterly normative, and the reason behind the gathering intellectual timidity of programmers is a fear of loss of income. This is a smokescreen, a half-truth at best which perpetuates itself. The closer they move to perfect mimicry of the output of the chains and franchises, independent and studio-bound both, the nearer to death they are, whether snuffed out as poor copies of the big guns, or taken on by those big guns themselves if no such provision already exists locally.

There are those cinemas that enjoy regular Arts Council funding yet show nothing but French rom-coms and safe American indie flicks, the funding siphoned off to sidebar 'artistic' activity. But demoting artists' work to a sidebar, as in many larger festivals, beyond insulting the artists themselves, is self-defeating, and a cause if ever for that funding to be revoked. The trouble is, people won't turn out to see artists' work in the cinema. Again, this isn't entirely true, and it needn't be so at all. Were that Arts Council funding to come with the caveat that it be spent on integrating, rather than segregating, artists' moving image in the context of the cinema's wider programme, they might have to think harder about how to do it justice and to attract audiences, rather than consigning it to a certain sort of death in the sequestered space of the gallery (that is, the death of its potential to become truly public).

Inevitably, cinemas won't make concessions while the threat of commercial collapse hovers overhead (even thinking of them, at present, as 'cinemas' is naive, owned as they are by arms-length investment outfits or American studios). Change the way the funding is distributed and that threat diminishes. Inevitably, audiences still won't materialise out of thin air. But change the way artists' work is programmed in cinemas; make the case for it, integrate it, put it in context, stand beside it, be proud of it and they will; slowly at first, but stick at it and they'll multiply. Cinemas need to show them why it's relevant and important and exciting and all the other things you'd hope to encounter at the cinema.

Nevertheless, a certain amount of the hostility towards the cinema as refuge for the experimental is historic, and in part intransigent because of history, or histories. The public antipathy towards art which appears to conceal as much as it shows is partly a feedback loop—they've been shown that this is the reaction that work deserves by the very institutions that are supposed to promote it; partly the fault of the class system, or perhaps even more general a very

British attitude across the board which incites and harbours a suspicion of anything—classical music, contemporary visual arts—which might classify itself, or be classifiable as ‘high culture’.

Indeed, we are taught to practice a peculiar form of self-abnegation, at once rejecting ‘high culture’ as snobbish, yet practising that same snobbery on that which we perceive as ‘mass culture’. Is this the endgame of a stratified society under so-called ‘late capitalism’, whose strata have distorted so much that to the naked eye there is now only a bulging middle class, the fringes at top and bottom masked, assimilated or vaporised?

Things need not remain this way. This binary logic around ‘culture’ is a lie that has been sold to people: the mythical high/low divide is just a convenient way of parcelling up ‘cultural content’ to fit a predetermined notion of social demographics in favour of easy monetisation, and trackable and predictable consumers and patterns of consumption. You only need to hop across the Channel to see that this needn’t be the case; that actually (with all usual caveats, i.e. that cultural pursuits still confine themselves to a hegemonic middle and centre) there’s a continuum across culture which demands not so much observation of boundaries or barriers. A borderless cultural scene isn’t nearly as attractive commercially, of course.

The spectre that stands behind this all is that of education. Perhaps a large part of the reason why we seem to have demurred so peacefully while a once-vigorous network of independent cinemas has been dismantled is that we were never shown the value of it in the first place: certainly, those who have come to love it have done so passionately, but with few exceptions, it has been the result of an extra-curricular endeavour, not a passion ignited while impressionable and open-minded at school. The way that arts education is delivered in the UK has for long been as a sidebar of sorts: an ever-diminishing addendum to a stolid diet of maths, English and sport. Music and the visual arts risk dropping off the spectrum altogether as contenders for subjects worthy of serious study—and that, inevitably, sets the tone for the way they are perceived by the society which inherits the legacy of that education. By contrast, the wartime and immediately post-war generation still perceive the value because of the way they were educated, but, now relatively affluent, time- and money-rich, what their expansive wallets allow, their curiosity has diminished: the scourge of ‘event cinema’—the very definition of a postmodern crisis about the place of cinema, the value of the live, the former primacy of the unique and unrepeatable forgotten in favour of a bloodless compromise of the always-on and ready-

digested—has largely been grown by them, with all the concomitant effects on a vital and diverse cinema scene.

This means that the ability of cinema to include within its meaning both that which is of mass appeal and that which is peripheral, nuanced or hard to classify, such as artists’ moving image—the ability to be magnanimous, effectively—is much reduced, with the result that artists’ moving image no longer coexists within ‘cinema’ as one facet of a larger whole, enjoying a collegiate relationship, and is instead pushed towards the polar extreme of academic study, just as ‘mainstream’ cinema is towards that other pole of popular culture. While the effect on the latter is perhaps less detrimental, both would stand to gain much were cinema once again a more holistic encounter, maximising those points at which commonalities touch *and* those which crystallise difference, to the benefit of both.

That the fate of cinema is shot through with factors—commerce, education, class—beyond its control is not to say it cannot effect change in them in turn. While we cannot change arts funding overnight, or the way art is approached in schools, or the grip of the studio system, we can work from the other side instead, rekindling the value of cinema as cinema. Reviving a magnanimous, omnivorous cinema—spreading those possibilities maintained by the *Star & Shadow*⁵ or the *Cube*,⁶ for instance, but also dragging them into the mainstream—would in turn affect those things seen currently only as determining factors and reveal in them instead a certain osmosis. Witnessing that cinema can be more than ‘cinema’, as it is at present, would affect the perception of all, from those encountering a meagre art provision at secondary school to those queuing for *Star Wars*. It would also reassert the cinema as a viable home for much artists’ moving image, as well as that which it currently houses. And that can only be a good thing.

So, perhaps it is time to ask the burghers of culture that, just as former inner-city areas can only be redeveloped as prime post-Olympic gated condos once artists have unwittingly made them desirable, cinema was made the force it is not by proposing a narrow monoculture but by revelling in the chance it presented for unexpected encounters and unknown pleasures—and this arose in part from artists and an artists’ cinema. This should be embedded at the heart of our everyday experience, not preserved in a vitrine or accessible only by a handful of hipsters: our cultural pasts and futures are ours, and the sites in which we access them should have the support to be able to take risks, remain vital and embrace plurality. Perhaps it is time to go back to the future.

¹Nathaniel Dorsky has written about this eloquently in his 2005 book *Devotional Cinema*, and the paragraph that follows this draws on his comparison of the rose window with the screen; Mircea Eliade's insights into sacred spaces in *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, 1959, are pertinent here, too.

²Peter Kubelka's *Invisible Cinema* is mentioned in this interview: <http://www.bfi.org.uk/news/materiality-film-peter-kubelka> An iconic image of its audience is here: <http://www.walkerart.org/image/peter-kubelka-invisible-cinema-1970>

³See this interview with Yto Barrada: <http://bidoun.org/articles/cinema-rif> The Cinémathèque de Tanger is an independent film collective and cinema in Tangier, Morocco, committed to promoting Moroccan and independent cinema: <https://www.cinemathequedetanger.com>

⁴Needless to say, with the caveat here that this is not intended as a purist's argument, and there are of course many grey areas in the space between cinema and gallery, exploited on their own terms to great effect.

⁵A DIY co-operative space based in Newcastle, Tyne and Wear, dedicated to grass roots culture—particularly cinema and music—in north east UK: <https://www.starandshadow.org.uk>

⁶The Cube is a microplex cinema and arts venue located in Bristol, UK, which was founded in 1998: <https://cubecinema.com>

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Curating Sensible Stages: Fabulation and an Artists' Cinema

Bridget Crone

In the essay that follows, I propose a particular approach to curating artists' moving image practice, an approach that I have termed 'curating sensible stages' for the way in which it refers to an intensity in the relationship between the artwork and audience. In particular, I am interested to explore the idea of what might constitute an artists' cinema both inside and outside of the gallery space; I will do this by addressing Ian White's notion of a 'differentiated cinema' (2013: 13), which is important to thinking what might constitute an artists' cinema, and through some examples taken from my own curatorial practice that draws upon writings and methodologies of theatre as much as moving image practices. Much of the writing on curating artists' film and video (or moving image practices) focuses upon problematics of programming and display, with economies of attention playing a leading role in considerations of how to show long-form film in the gallery, for example and the historical lineage of the division between artists' film and video art. It is also often concerned with making a distinction between the sculptural qualities of the artists' film or video as it is installed in the gallery (as part of an installation or the construction of an auditorium-type space within the gallery) and the screening space of the cinema or auditorium.

I propose, in contrast to these views, that the distinction between inside and outside of the gallery is no longer of prime importance, nor the distinction between form. Rather, it is the manner in which artists' film and video produces an intensity of time and space through its projection (or screening) that creates the differentiated space of an artists' cinema both inside and outside of the gallery. Inside or outside of the gallery, artists' cinema imposes upon the everyday to produce a space apart governed by its own temporal and spatial logics. I will begin to address what this intensity might entail through focussing on questions that relate the commissioning and curating of moving image based work, and on the development and production of new work that encompasses forms of public participation or has collaboration at the heart of its production. Through this reference to practice, I will make a brief gesture towards the idea of 'fabulation' as central to the curatorial, and to the methodology inherent in working towards this notion of an artists' cinema. Fabulation, which I will define more fully later, refers to a way of working that engages with dramatizations, uncertainties, speculations and their material impacts; it is of the real and the fictional but confronts both.

Much scholarship concerning artists' film and video practices has focussed upon a division between film and video that correlates with a similar divide between places of reception: auditorium and gallery. Too often these distinctions are made on the basis of changes and developments in technology, and their uses. We see this in Chris Meigh-Andrews' *A History of Video Art*, in which he traces the history of video art through developments in technology since video recording became available to artists from the late 1960s via the Sony Portapak (2014). Meigh-Andrews structures his chronology around these technological developments in terms of access, production, dissemination (that is, broadcast) and so on. While this provides a detailed account of the genealogies of technology in relation to social, political and cultural contexts, it solidifies the field of 'video art' as a closed category, and ties the expectations and reception of the work to a narrative of technological development. In taking this approach, Meigh-Andrews characterises artists' use of video as a problematic and somewhat unrealisable field lying somewhere between 'the traditional plastic arts', and time-based practices including cinema.

In her book, *The Place of Artists' Cinema*, Maeve Connolly provides a comprehensive outline of the various histories of artists' moving image practices based upon questions of sites of reception as well as debates and divisions between the plastic and time-based, the material and immaterial (2009). Connolly articulates this through the notion of the 'between' and 'in-between', mirroring the histories of artists' cinema where this 'betweenness' articulates the origins of artists' film outside of the gallery in an alternative social and political space, therefore between the gallery and the cinema and between the presence of the image or artwork and that of the viewer. This divide between the gallery and the auditorium traces a complex and contested history of 'inside outside' and 'outside in', and the entry (or re-entry, we might say) of video into the gallery in the 1990s, which coincided with the gallery being considered an alternative site from mainstream culture. As Chrissie Iles has noted (and Connolly quotes¹), the gallery provides a space of "radical questioning of the culture of both aesthetic and social space" (Iles, 2000: 262). Thus the 'between' might characterise video's relation to space—inserting itself in the dynamic between art and architecture—and the notion of a critical spatial practice where the gallery is considered as an alternative site (for culture, politics, aesthetics). While the 'inbetween' refers to the kinaesthetic experience of work as Margaret Morse has suggested. This 'inbetween' then highlights the situation that the work places the viewer within—the space of mediation between the 'here and now' of the durational time-based experience and the materiality

of the form; it is a state of embodiment. Following Morse, Connolly (2009: 22–23) gives examples such as Dan Graham's *Opposing Mirrors and Video Monitors on Time Delay* (1974) and Anthony McCall's *Long Film for Ambient Light* (1975). Graham's time delay or video circuit work consists of an installation of two rooms of equal size each with a video monitor and camera, such that the visitor is caught in a loop of self-surveillance. It thus intervenes into the space of the gallery to produce a set of knowledges that concern the social role of digital technologies as well as an embodied understanding of surveillance and image-capture (the 'outside in', if you like).

Connolly's notions of the 'between' and 'inbetween' of artists' video practice serves to problematize an analysis of artists' film and video tying it to an understanding of modes and sites of reception (artists' film in the cinema, video in the gallery). The 'between' and 'inbetween' then highlights video as a political and spatial practice and as a sensory, kinaesthetic one also (and the history of these debates). This situation can be further problematized by contemporary image theory that picks up on the material and kinaesthetic operations of the image (regardless of its primary media), and in a slightly different way by Ian White's work on the intersections between performance art, artists' film and video and expanded cinema. White uses the live, event-based nature of much of the expanded cinema practices of the 1960s as a vehicle for reworking an approach to artists' film and video that seeks to understand its qualities as being distinct from those of mainstream (or what was often termed 'narrative' film). He uses the term "differentiated cinema" to refer to this situation where the projection of film becomes a unique event in which the presence of the spectator as well as that of the film itself is emphasized (White, 2008: 13). Thus, questions of time and immediacy are key here as those of both film and the viewer's presence within a particular time and space. As White observes:

It leads to a differentiated cinema, a museum based on the principles of impermanence, immediacy and the temporal and the temporary, manifested in the minds of an audience who experience it in the space and time of the auditorium's that is the museum's permeating exhibition hall, and who are its active, defining agent. (2008: 14)

Here the suggestion is that the 'differentiated cinema' of artists' film and video practice intervenes into the museum to produce an always already live event. This sensory (or kinaesthetic) encounter results from the sensible effects of moving images, and the reciprocity of our relation to them.

It is with White's differentiated cinema and Connolly's notion of the 'inbetween' (via Morse) that I situate my

own proposition, which seeks a commonality between the materiality of the body and image within the space of its presentation and reception—a space that I refer to as the 'stage'. This is not a stage such as that familiar to the theatre, delineated and designated by the proscenium arch, but is a space and a time—a space-time—of intensity². A space and time that is also defined by a certain reciprocity between body and image—a kinaesthetic response or aesthetic appreciation. Thus, I am interested to explore the creation of these spaces of intensity—stages—both inside and outside of the gallery or auditorium setting, as well as both inside and outside of the screen, and crucially in the space between the screen and the not-screen. For me, this artists' cinema then is not situated within a specific space but creates a particular quality of space and time; it corrals its audiences as participants within its own temporal and spatial logics, and within its own narratives. An example of this practice could be found in the recent exhibition, I curated for the Institute for Contemporary Arts, Singapore in which, following ideas of dramaturgy, each artwork is presented as its own world; a world that the audience would enter into or encounter (Crone, 2017). A more abstract exploration of this idea in which an intensity of space and time is corralled by the artwork, distinct from the spaces of the everyday, can be found in *The Cinemas Project* (Crone, 2014). The research and production for this project took place over a number of years in rural Australia and involved community based research into the local histories of cinema followed by the commissioning and production of new performance and moving image works by contemporary artists. The experience of producing this project was one in which the discrete temporal spaces ascribed to an artists' cinema were extended beyond the presentation of the work to the conversations and imaginings of that work in its development. In effect, these discussions of the work to be made produced a discrete space and time outside of the everyday context we were in, as if we had indeed entered temporarily into a world apart.

Ideas related to "economies of attention", briefly referred to earlier, are pertinent here but in particular relation to the attention that artists' film and video demands in both its production and presentation (where production is considered an intrinsic part of the work's presentation *per se*). Here, what White refers to in his definition of a 'differentiated cinema' exists in the space of the imagining of the film that is yet to come (and the conversation about the film that has been). Therefore "the principles of impermanence, immediacy and the temporal and temporary" that are experienced in the "space and time of the auditorium", museum or exhibition hall are extended into the

form of the project itself and thus compressing the research-production and presentation of the project together). As an aside, we find a powerful reminder of this very possibility in *Flora* (2017), Teresa Hubbard and Alexander Birchler's recent work for the Swiss Pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale in which the son of the film's protagonist, Flora Mayo, poignantly remarks that he would have never considered that anyone would be interested in his mother. This is not only a testament to the attention that artists' film and video often gives to minor histories (in a reworking of what Connolly refers to as critical spatial practice), but to its demand—also “temporal and temporary”—to think and be otherwise (White, 2008: 14). Extending this idea further, I equate this practice to what Gilles Deleuze following Henri Bergson refers to as ‘fabulation’, that is both the calling forth of “fantasmatic representations”, and the “invention of a social collectivity”, as Ronald Bogue notes (2010:15).³ Fabulation is thus the fiction that is not quite a fiction and the fact that is not quite a fact.

In a recent lecture at the ICA, the media theorist McKenzie Wark noted that “a good concept is slightly true about a lot of things” (2015).⁴ Speculative thinking and indeed fabulation allows a looking towards possible and potential truths—things that might be “slightly true” yet immensely useful in thinking about the world around us. This activity of “speculative thinking” is deeply connected with the concept of fabulation in which conventional time and space is interrupted by the incursion of a form of visionary fictioning. This so-called ‘fictioning’ experiments with and takes us outside of the so-called real but has a stake in the real. Fabulation therefore engages with and articulates real and material problems through the creative, becoming-other, and emerges through the gaps and creates gaps through excess, interruption and speculation to create its own discrete space and time. And most importantly, it invites its own future audience (an audience to come) into this space of imagining the world differently. The idea of fabulation therefore speaks to the activity of curating. It also speaks to the idea of a writing (and curatorial) practice that deals not with predicates—statements of fact, the field of the known—but rather with speculative thinking; the indeterminate, fictive, questioning, possible. An artists’ cinema, I would argue, has much to do with this process or space of fabulation both through the process of calling forth to a future audience but also through the act of seeing and *becoming* differently—a process that takes place within the space of encounter. This is not to overly romanticise the role of the artist or curator (as Deleuze and Guattari perhaps do in their suggestion that an artist is “a seer [*voyant*] and a becomer [*devenant*]”) (Bogue, 2010:17)⁵ but to understand how this space

apart—that of an artists’ cinema, a ‘differentiated cinema’—emerges not through technical specialisms or categorisations but through a particular attitude to and treatment of time and its possibilities.

¹Iles quoted in Maeve Connolly's *The Place of Artists' Cinema*, 2009, page 20.

²In other contexts, I have referred to the stage through the notion of ‘flicker time’, which emphasises its temporal aspect through editing techniques particular to film practices that utilise disjunctive and cut up editing techniques.

³Bogue quotes from Henri Bergson's *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, 1954, page 108.

⁴Wark presented on his new book, *Molecular Red: Theory for the Anthropocene*, published by Verso (2015), in *FOMO: Yuri Pattison, McKenzie Wark* [lecture] at Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. 29 June.

⁵Bogue quotes from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 1994, page 171.

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Repeatable Viewings

Felix Bernstein and Gabe Rubin

We are compelled to repeat the same thing, incessantly, across contexts and platforms, play forms, and clubs. We've performed the same bad jokes, desublimated the same feelings, and revealed the same obscene desires over and over. First, it is true, on YouTube: the site of the acoustic version and the bite-sized confession and pastiche. At first, also, a graveyard for viewer-ships, one that gathered attention mostly for the cute, zany factor and the factor of youth.

To bring a video or film into a space, there is a need for a controlling theme, usually imposed by curator or space: either an evening's theme, a month's theme, or the theme is the name of the artist, a genre of filmmaking, a period, or the artist creates a theme and a statement, but there is always now the additional time to think about this theme, additional time that you might not take if *just* watching a film in a movie theater or at home on a laptop. This *air* about the pieces forces a programmatic linkage for the viewers, and sometimes the artists, rather than an absorptive or experimental one. There is in the first place, then, even when making a demand to greet a pre-existing searchable keyword to get people out of their house into a place, or a grant agency to give funds, or a film festival to seek films, or for a party promoter to get people into the seats, or a gallery to sell the work as 'art.' Internet art, queer, poetry, video art, 70s, 80s, even '16mm' can be a theme; the theme creates a binding to an expectation of length of viewing, the affective mood of the space, and the historical importance (which is then also often of market importance: this piece is very contemporary video art, this piece is very 70s, very 60s, and so on). We are bombarded by the theme.

As artists, we present in film/video, performance, visual art exhibition, and poetry contexts, sometimes venues are meant just for one but often enough events call for some combo of all three. Artists and curators have typically messed with every context but the one they are currently in. What happens when the same work context-hops is hard to trace or feel in any clear way: one can't really make the claim before going in that one space is going to corrupt, ruin, or misunderstand the original piece, since every time, once you're in, it feels different than when you are looking in.

Not with the critical objectivity expected of a reviewer, let's say, as artists bringing works (ourselves or a film/video) to an event, are looking out rather than looking in.

When looking in, as with a review, the ability of an artist answer to the expectations of a given discourse community creates 'criteria'. On the other hand, the artist is not supposed to evaluate the venue, curator, audience, or milieu despite the fact that the artist is continually being evaluated. But to change things around: what about the way the context succeeds or fails to meet the expectations of the artist? This is hard to answer, since, the longer we are inside the context the more our view changes, and then when we step out, it changes again. But here goes:

YouTube: Small audience, unexpected, even uncanny audience, strangers, hard to bomb, everything is a bomb and also a success, can be sent out to very specific people, or else just allowed to sit there, with a very minimal existence, as we are not sure who follows it.

Video Databank/EAI:¹ Tightly controlled audience, framing given to proper lineage and context-clues, hard to get at, or to want to get at, but good for school, where you watch the whole thing through, nowadays you don't watch the whole thing through unless the teacher is in the room with you.

Avant-garde Screening Series: The teacher is in the room with you, so you watch; you also watch because you are being watched watching, and this is a very serious kind of watching, but one you also want to leave behind, immediately.

Big Gallery: Can't assess response, not yours, impersonal, the response is never really a response to you, but a response to the environment, mediated to some extent by you, but especially by the gallery, the gallerist, the name of the gallery, some will sit and watch, most will squint their eyes, and watch themselves watching: if they can buy something and are endowed, then they will buy it but they will always feel a bit ripped off, but they will also be glad to be ripped off, since they are being ripped off by the right person, which is why here the person matters, though for the artist, it is always impersonal.

Art Museum: The piece can be walked by and also stared at, but you wouldn't know, or you'd find out later, but nobody would tell you, or go so far as to alert you, though, there may or may not be people evaluating at an angle a bit skewed because always broader than what we had in mind, but we will walk through a museum, if we'd like, and see the same film from class, from the archives, from the website, and sit and think why are we sitting here, but then you move outside and compare with the hard objects fastened to the wall, and sometimes, very rarely, this comparison

is better than having been to the cinemathèque or watched at home, because adding the hard objects occasionally reshapes the way you view the film, but really only rarely; really maybe only once.

Torrent: Still feels special and earned, as a DVD once did too, especially if downloaded from a special site that is invites only, but keeping the ratio right is impossible, and everything floats onto YouTube eventually.

Cinemathèque: Attention too focused so too easy to spot mistakes, which are sometimes also seen as intentional, and then overly analyzed, too many harsh assessments, quick calls, slow calls, and too much feigned seriousness.

Official Film Festival: Anonymity, film is played for you, there's no you there if you don't want, but if there is a you there then it is the you that is networking.

Queer Film Festivals: A tactile, playspace, filmmakers given anonymity if they'd like but also a circus in which there is small focus on the work and sometimes more on shenanigans in the hallways.

Museum of Art: Can't touch anything, lots of sound tests, looks like planetarium at one point but when people are inside it looks smaller, felt crowded, felt very visible, lots of control over the door, an awareness of who is or isn't there based on prepared lists, very alienated from audience itself but very in touch with the list: everything is played for the list.

Famous Punk Bar: Trying to stay in bathroom until more people come, trying to have an entrance when everyone knows everyone, people staying in bar not coming in, no matter how loud or emotive we are; this is not surprising since ridiculous or cruel art are stock and trade genres rather than ruptures in a given moment (they more likely confirm to the desired genre of given audience who often enough is all artists who even perform the same function).

Queer Bar: Very loud, and colorful, hard to hear yourself, it's all you, but a deranged and larger than you doing you for a them that is really not present but occasionally remembers that something did happen the night before.

Museum of Art: Half the audience is always necessarily there for the wrong reason, there to see the space or the name of the space but not the content; content-blind audience.

Hudson Valley House Party: Everybody standing and smoking including us, no distinction between audience

and us; audience seems ready to pounce, or themselves to perform, and they do, and there is no way to make it without stepping on another's foot.

Williamsburg Club: Surrounded by projectors, dark, drinking but drinkers are paying attention, standing fixed and in awe of it, much vibrant laughter, people in the room were all now in the piece, no feeling of division between the piece, the people, the performers, and the video; other 'acts' before and after feel complimentary; there is no curtain and no syncopation between them and it; it unravels at once, and then folds back into itself: there is still, what one always craves, a stand-still, where all eyes are on the piece.

Hipster Gallery: Packed to the brim, so bright, everyone too friendly, too carpeted, rolling around, trying to impress each other as watchers, not the thing they are watching.

East Village Theater: Introduction is too gracious, too polite, and too early in the day; too big, too anticipatory an audience, laughing before they should laugh, then when they are supposed to laugh, some of them even leave; sober, stale auditorium, smells stale, feels like entering a sitcom, feels like when on stage you are stuck there forever, with everyone else on the stage incredibly dependent upon you, and like you can never do enough to help them.

Big Arts Non-Profit Space: People are very curious as if it is a science exhibition, people eager to interact with one another while in the exhibition, to share knowledge, and politely nod to one another about things, people are relaxed.

Traditional Bar: People are very drunk and very competitive, everyone wants also to be on stage, so no one is paying close attention, except to say while watching, online, that they are at it, or enjoying it, but everyone is also fairly sedate, sort of tired.

DIY Art Space Gallery Co-op: No walls or stage just us and them and everyone being on the same eye level they are also taking photos and acting like an audience would so as to maintain an illusion of distance, which feels good.

Sex-themed Event: videos on crap DVD players, with skipping, and we're told the videos can't be heard, people occasionally watch them for about 4 seconds, but are more into chocolate dipped strawberries served by naked men.

Art School: The audience there is there because they want comfort, or to assemble, much like the library but

with a bit more noise, hard to preserve integrity but try to present videos as if we knew what we were doing when we made them, we try to talk together which we usually do but now find we cannot do.

Small Gallery: Trying to match the alienation of the audience, and their anxiety and boredom, very bright and people looking around at each other, everyone is sitting; feeling of being watched watching, and not knowing what to do besides watching but often we don't know if people watch it, and it's better maybe if they don't, when we watch in there, it's very dull, usually YouTube is better, as you can control the speed of the video you watch, and open many tabs at once.

From YouTube through to Small Gallery: What feels naked on YouTube feels totally clothed here, and a normalcy is granted instantaneously which can breed another kind of discomfort: people don't actually want to sit through things but rather snap-chat their experience to one another, who is practicing snap-curating or snap-critique; which is even smaller than YouTube and is the tiny medium that seems to hold the most weight: where the big trading of ideas and coteries and gossip and sales is occurring, the extra small screen. But without a load-in dock for this exchange, an actual habitus that is delivering *actual* aesthetically dialectical experiences, there'd be nothing to snap-chat about. So, the gallery remains as a storage space for ideas being circulated much faster by phone and as a *mere* storage space for themes and ideas, an inert, standing reserve of imagery that is only rarely carried to its conclusion in and for the courtesy of the viewer in the space. The viewer too is flighty and distant: distant watching, like distant reading is therefore the norm. And calls to immediacy and dance and liveness and accident and failure in the museum only redouble our awareness of the lack of immediacy in this space: where performance and film remains tethered to the object being sold, which is always the wall or the floor; dancers crawling around the room, or film projected across the ceilings and walls, all boosting revenue for the buildings; which are really just storage houses, standing reserves of art that could one day be carried to a conclusion, in the space of the viewer/viewed relationship, if anyone could handle being in that relationship. Whenever we've been in that relationship, both sides have attempted to retreat: the viewers would rather view themselves viewing or show off that they are viewers then view the work, and the viewed would rather view the viewers viewing then focus on themselves: nobody is paying much attention to the viewed. For art to be viewed again the theme would have to die. And the virtual space of sharing by themes, and auto-generating related tabs of resembling and relating works, of ranking and filing based on

keywords and likes, would also have to be deactivated. This would be less about what art or film or period or medium is valorized in a gallery and more about the fact that the gallery has art, no matter what, and so the encounter is partly unimportant, and partly repetitive, but it is also a place to test the always already mediated, digital, artificial and strained viewer-viewed relation on its own terms, without needing the safety nets of compulsory sociality.

¹Electronic Arts Interface is the resource for artists' video, based in New York, which was founded in 1971 to provide access to video art within an educational and cultural framework; EAI holds a comprehensive collection of video artworks from the mid-1960s to the present day: <http://www.eai.org>

Biographical details

Felix Bernstein and Gabe Rubin are New York-based artists working across theater, film, poetry, and digital media. Their work together has also been presented at MOCA Los Angeles, Issue Project Room, Anthology Film Archives, the Drawing Center, Reena Spaulings Fine Arts, Pilar Corrias Gallery, David Lewis Gallery, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Ben Borthwick is a curator and writer and is currently the Head of Creative Programme at KARST. He was previously Artistic Director of Plymouth Arts Centre, CEO of the Cardiff-based international art prize Artes Mundi and Assistant Curator at Tate Modern.

Bridget Crone is a curator and writer currently based in the UK. Focusing on the body in material and speculative terms, her work explores questions of “liveness” and the image in relation to contemporary performance art and moving image practices, and the changing relations of body, technology and ecology. Her edited book, *The Sensible Stage: Staging and the Moving Image* was published in a second revised and extended edition by Intellect/University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Anya Lewin is an American artist film-maker, educator and researcher based in the UK. Prior to working in academia, she had jobs in diverse fields

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Kayla Parker is an artist film-maker whose research interests center around subjectivity and place, embodiment and technological mediation, from posthuman feminist perspectives, with a particular interest in the interface between still and moving image.

Adam Pugh is a writer, designer and curator based in Newcastle upon Tyne, where he is also director of Projections, Tyneside Cinema's artist programme.

Lucy Reynolds is a writer artist and curator whose work focuses on questions of the moving image, feminism, political space and collective practice. She has curated exhibitions and film programmes for a range of institutions from Tate and MUHKA, Antwerp, to the ICA and the South London Gallery and has written for a range of journals including *Afterall*, the *Moving Image Review* and *Art Journal*, *Screen* and *Screendance*.

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